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Variation in blood concentrations of cadmium and lead in the elderly.

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This study aims at characterizing blood concentrations of cadmium (B-Cd) and lead (B-Pb) in a group of 176 men and 248 women, 49-92 years of age (mean 68 years), selected from the Swedish Twin Registry. Metal concentrations were determined using graphite furnace atomic absorption spectrophotometry. B-Cd ranged from 0.05 to 6.8 microg Cd/L (median 0.36 microg Cd/L) and B-Pb from 5.6 to 150 microg Pb/L (median 27 microg Pb/L). As expected, smokers had higher B-Cd than nonsmokers (median 1.3 versus 0.32 microg Cd/L), while B-Pb was not significantly related to smoking habits. Among nonsmokers, women had higher B-Cd than men (median 0.35 versus 0.25 microg Cd/L). In men, but not women, B-Cd increased with age and consequently the gender-related difference in B-Cd was most obvious in the youngest age group. On the other hand, women had lower B-Pb than men (median 24 versus 30 microg Pb/L). In both men and women, B-Pb decreased between 50 and 70 years of age, perhaps reflecting decreased energy intake. In women, the highest B-Pb in the 50-55 years age group is probably related to an increased release of Pb from the skeleton during postmenopausal bone demineralization. After about 70 years, B-Pb tended to increase, which probably is a cohort effect due to much higher Pb exposure 10-30 years ago when leaded gasoline was used. Copyright 1999 Academic Press.

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Abstract

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